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INDEX TO "THE SPHINX."—A

List of the Contents to the Second Volume of *The Sphinx* is given with the present number. Bound copies, price 5s. each, will be ready in a few days. The volume now in progress will extend over the year.

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[LANCASHIRE WORTHIES.]

BARTON BOOTH.

THIS famous actor sprang from the ancient and honourable family of the Booths of Barton (in the parish of Eccles), one closely allied to the old Earls of Warrington, and which, in the reign of Henry VI., had given two archbishops to the see of York, and in their persons two lord chancellors to England. He was the third and youngest son of "John Booth, Esq., of Barton," and was born in Lancashire, in 1681, the year before the amalgamation of the King's players under Killigrew with the Duke's players under Davenant, and their earliest conjoint performance at Drury Lane Theatre, Dryden furnishing both prologue and epilogue on the great occasion. "Blood and culture" united to form the future friend of Bolingbroke, and first performer of the hero of Addison's *Cato*. He was in his third year when his father, in embarrassed circumstances, removed to London to push the family fortunes, and in his ninth year he was sent to Westminster school, then presided over by the terrible Dr. Busby, a pedagogue with all his severity, however, quick to discern any promise in a pupil. Barton's own phrase subsequently, when he had to mention the place of his education, was that he had been "under the correction" of Dr. Busby, but he himself was a favourite pupil. He turned out a good scholar, showing a special relish for Horace, which he retained in after-life; and Chetwood, the prompter, records his fondness, in later years, for "taking a classic" from his shelves, and reading it off in the most "elegant English."

At school he betrayed the qualities which beckon their possessor to the stage. Knipe, Busby's successor in the head-mastership of Westminster, told the writer of the elaborate memoir with which Booth was honoured in the *Biographia Britannica*, that in the routine of lesson-saying the little Lancashire boy "repeated passages from the classics with such action and feeling that he was taken notice of by the whole school," and among Booth's school-fellows was Nicholas Rowe, afterwards a famous dramatist and Shakesperian editor and biographer. Booth's doom was sealed when Busby praised and his fellow-pupils applauded his Pamphilus in the *Andria*, at the annual performance of a Latin play, the fine old custom still kept up at Westminster. Soon after this approval Busby died, and Booth's father, angry at his son's inclination for the stage, used to say that "the old man had poisoned him with his last breath." The Westminster boys of an after generation were proud of the great actor whom their cloisters had sent forth, and before he died Booth had the satisfaction of hearing himself complimented in an epilogue to the annual play, one line in which declared that

Old Roscius to our Booth must bow.

And with the mention of his name the ancient dormitory, we may be sure, rang with applause.

Mr. Booth of Barton had intended his Hopeful for the church, and, at seventeen, the youth was told to be in readiness for "the university." According to one rather apocryphal-looking account of his early life, he really did go to Trinity College, Cambridge, but soon decamped from it with a company of strolling players, and only after a series of romantic adventures, including a reconciliation with his angry family, found himself on the Dublin boards. He was certainly an actor in Dublin in 1698, and he told Chetwood of a mishap which befel him on the night of his first appearance in the Irish metropolis. He played the hero in Southern's now all but forgotten *Orinooko*, a so-called tragedy, in which a stratum of rant is superimposed on a lower formation of the coarsest indecency. The night was hot; and, before going on the stage, Booth wiped his face, forgetting that it had been blacked to suit the part. When he came forward, he had, he said himself, "the appearance of a chimney-sweeper," and the laughter with which the audience greeted him was anything but appropriate to the effect which he wished to produce. It says something for his powers that, in spite of this *contretemps*, he was successful. His *Orinooko* brought him five guineas at a time when, as he avowed in confidential moments, "his last shilling was reduced to brass." His career in Dublin was of a kind to bind him firmly to the stage, and, after two or three years, he returned to England with the reputation of an actor of the highest promise.

At this time he appears to have really effected a reconciliation with his family, fear of whose anger is said to have prevented Betterton, at a former period, from acceding to his request to be allowed to try his chance on the London boards. However this may have been, he secured friends in higher spheres, and Betterton at once accepted his services on the introduction of Lord Fitzhardinge, a Lord of the Bedchamber to Prince George of Denmark, the consort of Queen Anne. Booth's first appearance was in or about the opening year of that sovereign's reign. He played Maximus in Lord Rochester's *Valentinian*, and soon afterwards, his old school-fellow Rowe producing the *Ambitious Stepmother*, had the part of Artaban assigned to him. Betterton was growing old, and it was not long before public opinion decided that his successor would be this handsome and stately young Lancashire gentleman, whose "style," from what we read of his great dignity, seems to have prefigured John Kemble, and whose voice, says Victor, was "completely harmonious, from the softness of the flute to the extent of the trumpet." The veteran Betterton, who had been taught by Davenant how Hamlet was played in Shakespere's own day, died in 1710, and Booth was proclaimed his successor. His only rival was Wilks, a more versatile actor than himself, and a better performer of such parts as Harry Wildair, but indisputably his inferior in "pure" tragedy. The year after the death of Betterton, Wilks, Colley Cibber (of *Provoked Husband* and *Apology* celebrity), and Dogget, the comedian (whose coat and badge are still rowed for by the London watermen on every first of August), became patentees and managers of Drury Lane. Before long, Booth himself became an actor at a theatre of which his chief histrionic competitor, Wilks, was one of the managers. To be a patentee like the others became, of course, and at once Booth's ambition, and it was one for the attainment of which he required not so much capital as the exertion of court influence. The Drury Lane license was granted by the Crown, and the Crown nominated the patentees. In his previous career, Booth had not "pulled" well with Cibber, Dogget, and Wilks, and for merely business reasons, apart from personal feeling, though this also contributed to their resistance, they wished to keep Booth from participating in their profits. Thus began a contest between Booth on the one side, and the patentees on the other, some of the details of which form very curious reading in the present age. Booth, as then became a man of his family and county, was a Tory, and he was befriended by Lord Bolingbroke, who, in the year of Betterton's death, had been appointed Secretary of State, when the Whigs, in a body, were ejected from office. Booth had Bolingbroke and other friends at court, which was then much at Windsor It gives a strange and a vivid notion of the interweavings of theatrical with political life in those days to read of the stratagem by which the patentees endeavoured to keep Booth away from Windsor. They did not dare to dismiss him; he was too great and popular an actor to part with, and perhaps drive into managerial rivalry. Accordingly, they gave him part upon part, in order to retain him as much as possible in London. Booth "accepted the situation," which enabled him to gain a firmer and firmer hold on the admiration and affection of the play-going public, while, at the same time, he defeated the stratagem of his employers by another. Let us, however, give this odd episode of our theatrical history in the words of Chetwood, the prompter, already quoted from, and who had the story from Booth himself. "To prevent," quoth Chetwood, "his soliciting his patrons at court, then at Windsor, they," the patentees, "gave out plays every night, when Mr. Booth had a principal part. Notwithstanding this step, he had a Chariot and six of a Nobleman's horses waiting for him at the end of a Play, that whipt him the Twenty miles in three hours, and brought him back to the Business of the Theatre the next night. He told me not one Nobleman in the Kingdom had so many sets of Horses at Command as he had at that time; having no less than eight; the first set carrying him from Hounslow to London, Ten Miles; and the next Set ready waiting with another Chariot to carry him to Windsor." So great in those days was

the influence of "blood and culture" even in the person of an actor, who happened, however, in Booth's case, to wear the right side of politics, at least for the time being.

These were the relations between Booth and the patentees of Drury, the public and the Court, when there befel a memorable dramatic and theatrical event, decidedly the greatest in his histrionic career. It came, too, at the very time to be of use to him. In the year 1712, the nervous, careful, and cautious Mr. Addison determined, at last, to finish and to bring on the stage the tragedy of *Cato*, some acts of which had lain by him for many years, having, in fact, been written during his Italian tour, and before he was properly known to fame. In 1712, the judicious as well as cautious Mr. Addison thought that the time had come for the completion and production of his "Liberal" tragedy, and that, with himself and his friends flung out of office, it might be desirable, as Colley Cibber puts it, to "animate the public with the sentiments of Cato." Of course there was no difficulty about the acceptance of the great Mr. Addison's play, and nothing marks more clearly the theatrical position which Booth had attained than that there was no hesitation about assigning to him the part of the hero. Many years before, when Steele read the first draft of the tragedy, he exclaimed, "Good God! what a part would Betterton make of Cato!" Betterton was gone, but here was Booth; nor did Cibber and Wilks, though they had a grudge at him and he was merely a servant of theirs, for a moment dream of giving the part to anyone else. Cibber was to be Syphax, and Wilks Juba, and the only question with them was whether, being a young man, Booth might not object to representing so old a personage. He was waited on accordingly with a respectful request, approaching a petition, that he would undertake Cato, and thus, as it were, "oblige the management." Booth saw what a grand opportunity was presented him, and was overjoyed at the offer, but carefully dissembled his satisfaction, and pretended to be the obliger instead of the obliged. The rehearsals took place—Swift, in his *Journal to Stella*, has chronicled in a characteristic jotting his presence at one of them—and, at last, the eventful night arrived on the morning of which the London *Daily Courant* had contained the interesting announcement:—"Never Acted Before. By Her Majesty's Company of Comedians. At the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, this present Tuesday, being the 14th of April, will be represented a new Tragedy call'd Cato." The "town" was in a state of the greatest excitement, and the chiefs and rank and file of both political parties had determined to muster in force, and show that they claimed the great Roman patriot as their own. On the Friday week before, Good Friday as it chanced, Bolingbroke's younger brother, George, had arrived at Whitehall with a packet containing the Treaty of Utrecht, signed and sealed; and, as soon as the welcome document was received, another sweep was made of the few remaining members of the opposition still in office. Never had the Whigs been so exasperated against the Tories, and the performance of *Cato* was looked forward to as affording an opportunity for a demonstration against the government. But there was Bolingbroke, radiant, in the stage-box, and applauding Tories on one side of the house echoed the claps of Whigs on the other. The victory was with Bolingbroke, who, by the neatest of turns, converted the triumph of the Whig dramatist into a Tory one. There had been an attempt, during the Whig régime, to nominate their military favourite, the Duke of Marlborough, Captain-General; and, after one of the acts, Bolingbroke, sending for Booth, presented him with fifty guineas, "for defending," as he expressed it, "the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual Dictator." Booth's acting on the occasion is represented as having been very fine, and the part remained one of the best in his repertory. But his triumph was partly due to extraneous circumstances, and to the adroitness of Bolingbroke. It gained him, however, the coveted position of patentee, and he shared, nearly to the end of his days, with Cibber and Wilks (Dogget retiring in disgust) the profits and perils of managerial proprietorship.

The remainder of his life was, for the most part, tranquil and prosperous. By contemporaries Othello was regarded as his masterpiece, though even in that part he was said to be inferior to Betterton. After the death of his wife (the daughter of a Norfolk baronet), and the termination, under circumstances most honourable to himself, of a subsequent *liaison*, he married Miss Hester Saintlow, a beautiful *danseuse* who developed into an actress, and who, though she had been the mistress of the great Duke of Marlborough, made him a most excellent wife. He celebrated her charms and her merits in enthusiastic verse, some of it written, be it noted, years after marriage. She weaned him from his only vice, the bottle, and had to take care lest, as sometimes happens with modern votaries of so-called temperance, he did not rush from the extreme of drinking into the extreme of eating. "I have known Mrs. Booth," says Chetwood, "out of extreme tenderness to him, order the table to be removed, for fear of overcharging his stomach." He died on the 10th of May, 1733, a wealthy man, leaving much property in town and country, and was buried at Cowley, in Middlesex. Years afterwards his widow erected to him the monument, still extant, in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey.

We always think of Barton Booth as "a scholar and a gentleman." It was characteristic of him that he acted carelessly when the house was thin. On one such occasion he suddenly exchanged languor for fire and energy, and replied, when asked the reason, "I saw an Oxford man in the pit for whose judgment I had more respect than for that of the rest of the audience." "He was," we are told, "no great speaker in company, but when he did, it was in a grave, lofty way, not at all unlike his pronunciation on the stage." Theophilus Cibber (Colley's son) says in his memoir of Booth: "He had the deportment of a nobleman, and so well became a Star and Garter he seemed born to it." So long as histrionic success bestows celebrity, the name of Barton Booth will shine with a certain lustre of its own in the annals of the British stage.

THE CONTROVERSY ON THE PRIZE PICTURE.

A FEW weeks ago there appeared, in the columns of the *Examiner and Times*, successive letters from artists of repute, including Mr. Frederick J. Shields, Mr. William Percy, and Mr. L. C. Livett, impugning the judgment of the Royal Institution Council in their award of what is still known as the Heywood prize. Their strictures were supported by an eminent art critic, Mr. Sidney Colvin. To the first letter attention was rightly called by the Editor as being on a subject of the most momentous importance to those more immediately concerned, and as possessing great public interest. And it is in accordance with this view that we intend to draw the notice of our readers to the leading features of the controversy which ensued.

It should be premised that the Heywood prize was instituted about the year 1840 or 1842, and took the form of gold and silver medals. These were awarded sometimes for the best oil painting or water-colour drawing, sometimes for flower pieces, models in clay, and architectural or ornamental designs. Again, as regards the pictures, whether in oil or water-colour, one year the prize or prizes would be given for historical subjects, another for a landscape, a third for no particular class, the condition simply specifying that the work must be "the best." The sum presented by Mr. Heywood appears to have been exhausted in 1863; at any rate, the title of the Heywood medal was then discontinued, and that year and every year since one prize of fifty guineas has been substituted, the express conditions being that it is offered "for the best picture exhibited during the whole period of the Exhibition," and that "it has been painted within two years." We gather from this that the prize is now given by the Council of the Royal Institution, and, if so, is no longer entitled to the name which has frequently been attached to it during the recent controversy. It will complete this little history if we append a list of the works that have won the coveted distinction since 1863. In that year it was accorded to Mr. Alfred Elmore, R.A., for his picture of Lucretia Borgia; in 1864, to Mr. Andrew Maccallum, for the Morning Glow; in 1865, to Mr. E. J. Poynter, A.R.A., for his Faithful unto Death; in 1866, again to Mr. Maccallum, for his Glade in Sherwood Forest; in 1867, to Mr. J. D. Watson, for The Parting; in 1868, to Mr. George Mason, A.R.A., for The Evening Hymn; and last year to Mr. Keeley Halswelle, A.R.S.A., for Roba di Roma.

This last is the work which has occasioned the recent very interesting discussion. The dissentient artists and their supporter, Mr. Colvin, contended that the influence exercised by such an award would be detrimental to the interests of true art, aud contrary to the end the givers of the prize had in view—the elevation of the public taste. They also respectfully suggested to the Council that the only plan by which error could be avoided in the future, and a more just dispensation

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of the honour made, would be to call to their aid such professional men as, being fully competent to advise, would not be less willing, if requested. Their letters had the effect of bringing forth a defender of the Council's judgment, under the *nom de plume* of "Laicus," who, in indignant terms, professed his wonder that no one had rushed to the protection of the Council from the persistent attacks of the painters, upheld the justice of the Council's choice, and demanded to know the grounds on which they supported the claims of the picture of Elijah and the Widow's Son. To this Mr. Shields replied, showing that the grounds of preference "Laicus" demanded had been already fully furnished in the letters he condemned, and that the man who failed to perceive this was also as deficient in the powers of observation and comparison needful to determine the respective merits of the pictures in question. "Laicus," ready to answer, gave what he called reasons why he agreed with the Council, and refused to allow the palm of excellence to the picture of the painters' choice. With a *naiveté* that would have been amusing had it not been utterly inconsistent and ridiculous, this anonymous, and therefore unknown, champion of the Council opened his second letter with a defiance to the entire body of the artists, and concluded by the magniloquent avowal that he was "not afraid." If the painters had advertised "Wanted a target," they could not more readily have been accommodated. But the ignorance and blindness of the objections of this hero moved others to inquiry, and consequent indignation against his reckless statements; and one very practical writer, signing himself "A Veracious Layman," with joiner's rule in hand, betook himself to Mr. Madox Brown's picture, and, by actual measurements, demonstrated that in all the points of line and proportion selected by "Laicus" for censure he was entirely in error. Then, changing his defence to attack, he showed that in composition, colour, and drawing, the prize picture was anything but the consistent whole it was avowed to be by its champion. Nothing can be more evasive and shifty than "Laicus's" final letter, the only point in it being the readiness with which he availed himself of a difference of statement by his two lay adversaries (agreed upon all other points) about the direction of the widow's eyes. We can answer for it that the view taken by Mr. F. J. Shields, the artist whose letter closed the dispute, *i. e.*, that the eyes of the mother are intently gazing, with half assured faith that they do not deceive her, upon her risen son, is the right one. Beaten mathematically about the length of the child's figure, "Laicus" sought refuge in an assertion that it is considerably bent, thus evidencing a lapse of memory or blindness of eye entirely consistent with his previous statements; the fact being that the allowance in height should be made the other way, the prophet's figure being slightly bent, the child's nearly straight. But "Laicus" called the crooked straight, and the straight crooked. In the absence of any special warrant, he persisted that the painter is in error in making the boy so tall; but we would ask, where is the special warrant in the words of scripture that "the child" was an infant? And this not existing, the artist was free, within the extreme limits of childhood, to choose that age and stature which would most favourably consort with his design.

Mr. Shields and Mr. Colvin described very ably some of the excellencies of the picture of Elijah, both from an æsthetic and a material point of view, as we had before done in our Exhibition notes. To their observations we may add that, whilst the prize picture was remarkable at first sight for a strutting bravura of brush work, which formed its chief merit, Mr. Madox Brown's was painted with a simple, direct charm of execution which, perfect as it was, never for one moment claimed attention to itself, and away from its subject.

Two lessons "Laicus" might learn from his discomfiture. First, that any cause—a doubtful one most of all—suffers more from its espousal by a weak advocate than from all the slings of its assailants. Secondly, in the words of an old wise poet on sins of speech—

> Now, these four things, if thou
> Consider, are so bad that none are worse.
> First—among counsellors
> To thrust thyself when not called absolutely.

But the painters owe him gratitude if the Council do not, for he has furnished them with an opportunity of reiterating and enforcing the justice and reasonableness of their request—not asking that they alone, as professional men, should adjudge the prize, nor despising lay opinion, but insisting that of necessity, it is only partially valuable, because only partially educated. They ask not to exclude others, but to be themselves heard. This request is most reasonable, and has been urged in so respectful a spirit, that we do not see how the Council can decline to attend to it. One result of this controversy has certainly been to shake the public confidence in the Council of the Royal Institution as arbiters of art, and it can only be restored by a concession of the kind indicated in the disposal of the prize hereafter.

THE DOG MARKET.

THE Dog Market in Manchester differs from most other marts inasmuch as it has no particular *locus standi*. If you wish to buy fowls, rabbits, pigeons, or ferrets, with an occasional goat or two, and a few hedgehogs, you have only to visit Withy Grove, and there, upon one identical spot, you may find what you require. By going a little further up the street you will reach Shudehill Market, where by the outlay of a few pence, you may furnish yourself with more vegetables than you can conveniently carry home, not to speak of bloaters, tripe, cowheel, whelks, periwinkles, black-puddings, and other homely but popular edibles. Beyond Shudehill Market, in an adjoining street, you encounter the bird dealers, where you may accommodate yourself according to your ornithological tastes. If, however, you wish to provide yourself with a dog, unless you go to some of the dealers in the neighbourhood of Deansgate, who combine dog-dealing, rat-killing, badger-baiting, and an occasional dog-fight, with the sale of beer, there is no exact spot appropriated by dog-fanciers, where you can "spot" any particular dealer, as if he was a British merchant with his habitual pillar on the Exchange, or as the cotton waste dealers used to establish themselves in High Street, before they were raised to "another place"—the large room adapted to the purposes of a waste dealers' exchange, in the Market Place.

The dog dealers are a peripatetic set of individuals, addicted to fur caps and cotton neckerchiefs. On Tuesdays and Saturdays they are to be found in considerable numbers wandering round the Exchange, taking sundry excursions up Market Street, down St. Mary's Gate, up Fennel Street and Millgate, and pulling up for a short time in the Market Place. It has often been to us a source of wonder where all the dogs come from, and where all the people come from who buy the dogs. There can be little doubt that many of the animals have been stolen at one time or another, although we do not mean at all to insinuate that the gentlemen who go about leading them in strings have been guilty of any such delinquency. Judging from the advertisements which daily appear in the newspapers, the number of dogs stolen must be enormous. Probably not one person in ten who loses a dog advertizes him, and it is more likely that he will be found offered for sale in the streets of Liverpool, London, Birmingham, Hull, or even Hamburg, than in Manchester. We knew an instance of a lady who lost a pet dog here, and within two days a gentleman of her acquaintance found a man offering him for sale in Castle Street, Liverpool. A friend of ours, last year, lost a favourite terrier, which, within a week, was offered to himself, for sale in St. Ann's Square for three guineas, a piece of effrontery which nearly caused the seller to be handed over to the police. On one occasion we lost a black retriever at nine in the morning, two miles from town, and at one o'clock found him in the hands of a dealer in the Market Place; but as a rule, when a dog is stolen, he is not easily recovered in Manchester, and the loser must look for him elsewhere.

The dog-dealers seem to do much the largest trade in terriers, spaniels, and retrievers. A dealer leading about a greyhound or a pug-dog would be a curiosity. The demand for terriers seems to be insatiable, and the favourites appear to be the rough blue-backed dogs with fawn-coloured heads and tan legs, of which about one in a hundred is worth twopence. The long-bodied, short-legged, hard, wiry-haired Scotch terrier is seldom to be met with in the dog market. A good bull-terrier may be met with occasionally, but if he is wanted for killing purposes let the purchaser have him tried first. We are no advocates of killing rats in a pit, but we presume even the excellent Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would not object to a dog killing a rat which had destroyed a few chickens and ducklings, or tackling a fox which was in the habit of robbing the henroost. If a dog is wanted merely as a lady's pet, any of the dog-dealers will provide the required article

within a few days, whether the animal wanted be an Italian greyhound, a spaniel, terrier, or poodle, but pug-dogs are not so easy to get, and being at present fashionable, command very high prices.

Most dogs will find their way home when lost, even from a considerable distance, but as there are always people on the look-out for stray dogs, if the missing dog is a valuable animal the probability is that he will be picked up, and either sent out of the way or kept until a reward is offered for him. The sagacity of dogs in finding their way home is wonderful. Some time since, a lady friend of ours residing in Bowdon, had occasion to send a favourite Scotch terrier from home. He was conveyed to Manchester and tied up in a place where he had never been before. His new master loosed him for a few minutes, when the dog immediately disappeared. The same night he was scratching at his mistress's door in Bowdon, half dead with fatigue, and covered with mud. He had never been that road before, and yet he found his way home in a few hours, and must have swam the canal once, the river twice, and overcome many other obstacles in the dark. Some people have a wonderful faculty for training dogs, and we should think that Mr. James Doughty, the clown in the Theatre Royal pantomime, is liberally gifted in this way, for he accomplishes wonders with his troupe of animals, which include all manner of breeds.

THE DANCE OF FANCY AND THE FEAST OF SOLE.

SELECTION o'er, the tickets fixed and signed,
Now has the hon. sec. nothing on his mind,
Which means we are deficient in the lore
That perhaps would tell us he had naught before.
Now has he sieved the nothings from the nobs,
Now stamp'd the swells, and stamp'd upon the snobs;
Or if perchance one snob has pass'd the gate,
With all his imperfections on his pate,
Now must the hon. sec. his annoyance smother,
By saying he's a man, perhaps a brother.
Blest be the Fates which give us such a chooser,
To name the right horse, and to pick the loser,
To say who proper is and who is not,
Which smells like rose and which like Bergamot,
Who has a grandsire and who length of purse,
Who has a father and who fares the worse,
Who dines with who, who always dines in dress,
Makes free in barracks and enjoys the mess,
Praises one cellar's claret, port, or hock,
Telleth the owner he's a fine old cock,
Cuts him next day with elegant design,
"An awful bore—I only like his wine!"
Happy the souls who such a Solon find,
To make their laws, to loosen and to bind;
Whose tranquil features will reflect their own—
That is, their minds, and not their flesh and bone.
Blow, bugle, blow! set the wild echoes flying,
And rumour echoes answer, lying, lying, lying!

But now the motley-coloured throngs approach,
The XIVth. Louis calleth from his coach,
"Charles, drive on quick, I feel so cursed big
"In this crumped frill and monstrous periwig;
"I'm sure my calves are looser than they were,
"I look all waistcoat and I feel all hair;
"My wife is England's former good Queen Bet,
"Who seems a peahen trimmed with mignionette.
"An ancient, crazy pantaloon am I,
"To stick my finger into this 'ere pie!"
(You see the hon. sec. to'd a frightful "crammer"
When in "the little go" he mention'd grammar.)
But queens and kings afford no scope for taste,
Like lath and plaster buildings made in haste.
There is no fitness in our Bluebeard King
Whom J. A. Froude has just been whitening,
Appearing as our bluff King Harry more—
Let's rather say King Harry, eight pound four.
So when the Queen of Sheba makes her set
As *vis a vis* with Marie Antoinette,
Or else, perchance, with Araby's fair daughter,
We'll call them diamonds of twenties' water;
While the long youth who follows Touchstone's school
Shall be proclaimed as sixteens' Mayall mule,
An unaccustomed count for one so tall,
But the girls say he should not count at all,
Or, if he did, as sure as you're alive,
He'd count that two and two surmounted five.
Here comes a spindle twirling round the room,
And here the head stock of a Blackburn loom,
And here a warper trunk'd in ancient hose,
Like never ending chignons all in rows;
A lady warp-cop meets the warper's eyes,
But he as softly wafts away her "size;"
Then young Miss Jacconet, a fourteen square,
Adjusts her slender eye-glass for a stare;
A wealthy shipper, looking rather queer,
Says, somewhat roughly, "too much filling here,"
Then pulls Miss Jacconet, bedecked with flour,
And makes her feel and talk and savour sour.
Anon a turban'd Turk, with fearful squint,
Selects his partner in a piece of print,
Not a fast colour, that would be all bosh,
The print, like him, must warrant not to wash,
Or else the twin complexions would grow sadder;
He would get raging mad, his partner "madder."

Such is the feast of fancy; such the flow
Of soul, or sole, 'tis all the same you know;
For, as the phrase goes, these extremes do meet—
One at the head, the other at the feet.
A topsy turvy world, my masters all;
A fancy poem for a fancy ball!

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE SIMULTANEOUS CHARITY COLLECTIONS.

WOULD it not be well if the clergymen who are taking in hand the arrangements for the approaching simultaneous collections at all the churches and chapels in the town, in aid of charitable institutions, gave a programme of their intentions? Nobody can feel called upon to contribute to anything without knowing what he is contributing to, and "medical charities" is a very vague term. The proportions in which they propose to distribute the funds raised, it would also be satisfactory to hear. Such an institution as the Infirmary—good as it is—is not the sort that stands most in need of casual aid like this. No institution gets its money more easily. Contributing to the Infirmary is like taking in *The Times*, or keeping an account with the Bank of England: folks are proud of it. Other deserving institutions stand in greater need of such assistance as is proposed; and it will not be right if the Infirmary takes the lion's share. Let the clergy say what they intend to do, and they will relieve a many people's minds. There are not a few persons who object to trusting a parson farther than they can see him.

MR. RUSKIN ON FIELD SPORTS.

The discussion about the morality of this form of amusement is still intermittently continued. One of the latest contributions to the controversy is a letter of Mr. Ruskin's to the *Daily Telegraph*, expressing his inability to take part in the discussion of the merits of the case, from want of time; but directing attention to the injury done to the hunters in the way of lost time and demoralized taste, rather than the pain inflicted on the hunted. With all deference to Mr. Ruskin, we venture to be of opinion that the controversy is much better as it stands. It may be that the suffering inflicted on the fox is not equal to that imposed upon an overloaded dray-horse, as Mr. Ruskin says, but it is not there-

fore immaterial, as Mr. Ruskin seems to imply. It is an essential part of the sport. True, it is not the end and object of the chase, but it is the immediate and necessary consequence of it, and accordingly an integral part of the pursuit. The injury inflicted on the huntsmen, on the other hand, is not a necessary consequence, so far as the waste of time goes; because, when not indulged in to excess it is a positive benefit to the sportsmen, both mentally and physically. The demoralization of taste and character consequent upon it we acknowledge to be a necessary result; but this is so only because it is a sport in which the pain of one animal is the means of the pleasure of the rest. Here, again, the feelings of the fox are at the bottom of the argument; and we cannot help thinking, despite Mr. Ruskin's protest, that the cruelty of the sport is the true objection to it. Whilst we are again on this subject, let us do our little to explode the sophistry that, the fox's life being only suffered that he may be chased, he gets more pleasure than pain out of the pursuit, and that therefore the pursuit is justifiable. Suppose a race of cannibals kept up a colony of tender missionaries that they might roast and eat them when occasion and the cook served: would the festival be justifiable?

MEMS. THEATRICAL.

Two occurrences in the theatrical world deserve note. On Saturday night last, the anniversary of the production of Mr. Robertson's *School*, that comedy was represented, at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, London, for the three hundredth time. At an early date, Mr. William Farren, so intimately associated in the mind of Manchester with the character of Charles Surface, in the *School for Scandal*, is to essay his father's great part of Sir Peter Teazle, in that comedy, at the St. James's Theatre, London.

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE: PROFESSION *v.* PRACTICE.

The proposal to open the Botanical Gardens at Old Trafford on Sundays was rejected on Monday last by 183 votes to 119. It is a matter of comparatively small public interest or importance. The motion, if carried, would only have given the privilege to the proprietors. It was not to be expected that an affair of this kind could possibly occur without affording at least one of those instances of inconsistency which seem to be indissolubly associated with the observance of Sunday and Sabbatarian intolerance. Opportunely enough, a correspondent, writing from Moss Side, and appropriately signing himself Anti-Pecksniff, sends us the following communication:—"The gentleman to whom opponents of the Sunday opening of the Botanical Gardens were requested to send their proxies, resides some four or five miles from Old Trafford, but he is very jealous of any encroachment on the Sunday leisure of the Society's attendants. In the discussion on Monday he 'challenged any gentleman to prove that the opening of the Gardens on Sunday would not require the attendance of additional servants—the gatekeeper and others.' This gentleman's coachman and horses bring him on a Sunday several miles to a place of worship, although four at least of his denomination are much nearer his residence, and his coach passes within a few yards of two of them on the way. And yet, he is supposed to ground his illiberal restriction of the movements of his fellow-proprietors on one of the paragraphs of a very old piece of legislation, which mentions 'cattle' and 'man servant.' I wonder whether any of the proxies, which Saturday's advertisement requested by 'next post,' gave the clerks or postmen any extra work last Sunday."

THE PRIZE PICTURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

Sir,—At the conclusion of a controversy which has been carried on in the columns of the *Examiner and Times*, most courteously opened for the expression of the grievance felt by almost every painter of this district, that Mr. Madox Brown's noble picture was passed by in awarding the prize, I wish to do your journal the justice of acknowledging the discriminating taste with which this picture was selected in your Exhibition Notes as preeminently the finest work on the walls, and the singular boldness with which, when the award had been made public, you at once, alone and unsupported, protested against the decision of the Council.—Very respectfully, yours,

Cornbrook Park, Jan. 17, 1870. FRED. J. SHIELDS.

PULPIT AND PEW.

THINGS ecclesiastical have always been a fertile subject of satire. Whether it is that the littlenesses obvious in the practice of them derive an increased conspicuousness, and the satire of them an increased pungency, from the grandeur of the theory which originates that practice, or whether it is that ecclesiastical persons are gifted with an undue share of the frailties of humanity, who shall say? The fact is there. In time past as well as in time present, and in time present quite as much as in time past, the unfortunate priest—whether he be called a clergyman, or a minister, or a parson, or a pastor, or a preacher, or a spiritual guide—has been called a good deal else as well. But of all the accusations that have been heaped upon his head, the one most pertinaciously reiterated is that of dulness. This charge has been so persisted in, that even the dull preacher himself is not so dull as to be unable to perceive that there is truth in it, and acquiesces in it in a helpless sort of way. Under these circumstances, it is an agreeable relief to find an instance of a preacher facing round and boldly flinging back the accusation on the preached to. The clergy are indebted to the organ of the Unitarian body in this city for this new setting of an old, old tune. The idea that the dulness of sermons in general is the consequence of the dulness of the hearer quite as much as that of the speaker, is ingenious, and shows valid grounds for a cross action, but we fear that as a set-off the plea is demurrable. If the fact pleaded to were that the congregations *think* the preachers dull, it might fairly be replied that the congregations are too dull to know whether the preacher is or not. But the fact is that they *are* dull; and being so, the dulness of their hearers does not meet the case, inasmuch as no amount of interest in the audience can create the same in a sermon where it is not, though dulness may neutralize it where it is. But as a subject in itself, quite separate from the dulness of the pulpit, the dulness of the pews is equally fit for reprehension, and a theme that deserves to be pursued.

Congregations *are* dull. People have got into a way of going to church, as they have got into a way of going to Hallé's concerts. What particular church they have got into a way of going to, is an accident of birth just as much as the colour of their hair. Sometimes, if they are born into an unfashionable place, they transplant themselves to a fashionable one; as sometimes, people who are born with red hair dye it brown. Their religion is handed down from generation to generation, with the family pew. At the decease of the common ancestor, his stock of creeds, forms, and confessions of faith, with the appurtenances, is inherited by the next of kin, together with the rest of his goods and chattels, but with that diminution of zest consequent upon its distribution amongst so many. By and by, all the little original stock of religion is evaporated in the process of transmission, and nothing but the appurtenances remain—to wit, the prayer books, and the hymn books, and the stools and carpets in the pew. Still, the lineal descendants array themselves in their best, every Sunday morning, and keep up the old family tradition. Whether they hear a venerable dignitary of the church or a youth in a black gown fresh from the university—it is all one to them. They get about as much good out of the one as out of the other. The thunders of power and the quavers of incapacity are convertible qualities, for all they know or care. The one is loud, and the other is low: that is all.

To the sensitive mind there is something exasperating in the very regularity with which people attend divine worship. The action appears to be so merely a mechanical effect. It is as though worshippers were a species of clock-

work, that strikes as a matter of course, indeed can't help striking, when the time for striking comes. Each church-goer might have been wound up in his childhood and gone on going to church every Sunday morning since: or rather, emulated the old lady in the sea-weed cottage—come out when it was fine, and stopped in when it was wet. We know that the absence of a many pew and seat holders upon wet Sundays is a stock subject of complaint amongst the ministry; but it stirs within us a feeling of relief. It is simply intolerable to meet the procession of smug people, carrying gilt books, who on fine Sunday mornings march along the footpath in shining rows, as regular as peas in a peascod. When one is waiting in a doctor's ante-room, in company with nothing but a back number of the *Lancet* and an obtrusive time-piece that will tick—tick—tick through the silence without ceasing, has not the reader experienced an overmastering impulse to set upon the everlasting thing and stave its dial in? Similarly, one feels moved to violently assault these mathematical worshippers, whom one is just as certain to find learning to do right upon the Sunday as not doing it upon the Monday. A wet day relieves the overwrought mind. Those whom one meets upon such days one may credit with not being quite machines; for rain rusts the machinery and it doesn't act upon wet Sundays.

Next, just look at a congregation sitting under a sermon. Did you ever see so aggravating an appearance of deference and attention? "Very gratifying," do you think it is? Well, you are easily pleased. Twaddle to those people tediously as he may—and the twaddling capacity of many a parson is not to be exaggerated—he will be listened to (or seemed to be listened to) with the regulation courtesy. Let him speak to them words of wisdom, and he is attended to with not one jot more interest or one jot less. Let him be witty, and he will not raise a smile. Let him threaten them with eternal torment: they will not appear to be at all agitated. Let him promise them everlasting bliss, and they don't seem to care about it in the least. It is plain truth that a very large number in most congregations are unable to tell what is good from what is poor, in a discourse. The man who delivers it wears a black gown and a white tie, and they suppose it is all right. If he wasn't competent, he wouldn't be there. They come to hear him, and they go away when they have heard him. If he inflicted himself upon them for only five and twenty minutes, they suffer him in silence. If he spoke for half an hour, they call him a great bore. In all congregations, we suspect, and in most congregations, we feel pretty sure, the body is made up of such material as this. There is a genius that can stir even this inanimate matter, and breathe into it a temporary soul; but genius is rare, and, it has been remarked, cannot be turned on like the tap of a beer machine. Genius cannot preach two new half-hour sermons every Sunday.

Considering, thus, what congregations are, the sin of dulness is not so unpardonable in a minister. Good matter must be in large measure thrown away. Whereas, inanity being preached, nothing is wasted but time. All this, however, does not touch the fact that ministers *are* very often dull. We do not see how their case admits of their not being. A man cannot be interesting for five and twenty minutes at a time at stated intervals; and we do not see why he should feel himself called upon to speak invariably for that period. In the Church of England, sermons are not, as a rule, oppressive in respect of length, but in dissenting places why are sermons of less length than half-an-hour unknown? We do not mean to say that half-an-hour is at all too long for a discourse in which the matter and the manner both are good; but we do not see why a preacher should compose a sermon of that length when it is not in his head and heart to do it, and when in all probability its delivery will be as irksome to his congregation as its composition to himself. If ministers would not persist in the doleful endeavour to make up in quantity what is lacking in quality; if they would give us more of ourselves and to-day, and less of other people and two thousand years ago; if they would desist from perpetually calling the world a vineyard and mankind sheep—though far be it from us to deny the number of sheepheads in a congregation; and if they would give up that fulsome flattery which would be unbearable to man, but which is esteemed peculiarly acceptable to God: His service would be improved and His servants edified. But when all is said and done, a disheartening misgiving remains. Are sermons any moral use? We do not say that they are not; but we should like to see it definitely demonstrated that they are.

WHAT TO EAT, AND HOW TO COOK IT.

BY A BON VIVANT.

3.—DINNER.

THE meals and meal-times of what some people call "the higher classes" and those of the ordinary work-a-day people of Manchester and of most other English, or, at least, Northern-English places are, we think, much the same. They differ somewhat perhaps in extent, and two of the meals have changed their names, but that is all. On the same principle as that on which we like to call a spade—a spade—and neither an agricultural implement nor a "shoo,"—we prefer to call the mid-day meal "dinner," and not "lunch." Your Manchester man, of whatever station, comes to his business early, and works hard; he requires therefore an early dinner, and in that case, lunch is an abomination, to say the least of it. It is even worse; it is not what it pretends to be. In reality and origin it is the Spanish "L'onze," the eleven (o'clock) meal, common to Spain and France, whose people have only two meals a day.

Whether or not the Irishman deserved what Lord Lyndhurst said of him as to blood and religion, he is certainly, on his native land, an alien as to meals. He, like "Mossoo," has two meals a day—what we should call here a late breakfast, and what a Londoner would call an early dinner. These are habits entirely out of the line we have taken, and beyond our consideration, we have come to the conclusion that there is no reconcilement or compromise possible between the two systems, so we must leave them

> Non ragionam di lor,
> Ma guarda e passa.

The South-country man who comes to business in Manchester seems to be dissatisfied unless he can make an occasional sort of protest in favour of his old habits, and will coolly tell you, any day about two o'clock, that he has just been to have a chop for his lunch, adding, "*I* make it my dinner," which, as it was probably very nearly a pound in weight, he has easily been able to do, perhaps would have a difficulty in doing otherwise.

Our chart for the day stands then thus:—The North country and the South agree pretty nearly about breakfast. In the South they have a substantial meal about mid-day, which they call lunch. We have a similar meal at the same time, but we call it dinner. The Southern "kettle-drum" is a repetition, an unconscious duplicate, of the Lancashire "baggin," or half-past four tea, and our supper at half-past eight, answers to the Londoner's dinner at eight, the general West End dinner-hour of the present day. For be it known we go in for that old-fashioned meat-supper, about which more anon. The question we have now to put is, "What's for dinner?"

Let us at once discard the notion that we are about to treat of "grand" dinners. We have no long catalogue or *menu*—soup, fish, entrées, and the rest of it. We dine early, and, whatever a late dinner may be, an early dinner must not be heavy, nor even long—we have to get back to the desk, or the "rooms," or go on 'Change again, or see a customer, and in good time too, or any of such doings will be im-

possible. "What! business after dinner; what becomes of your digestion?" Never better, say we, than when actively stirring about. Indigestion is produced by—we fear we shall shock somebody—by over-eating! In some degree, perhaps, by eating unsuitable things, but more commonly by eating too much. Not much, perhaps, compared with the quantity a man sees others eat, but more than his own powers are equal to—in short, too much. A person, by no means perhaps a valetudinarian, may see with astonishment how a little eager man, sitting at the opposite side of the table at Berrysbrown's, orders a "dinner-steak" and walks into it literally "like one o'clock," and is calmly disposing of a "nugget" of cheese and his second or third half-pint of Bass, or the "haf-naf" of Mossoo, before he himself has accomplished the—to him—perilous undertaking of getting down part of the lean of a chop and one or two glasses of sherry. He had better have five minutes in front of Jem Mace, or "The Chicken," if he survives, than attempt what this little convive does every day. But we fear we are, as the man said of his ducks, wandering from the question.

There is no reason, however, because we do not want all the things which follow the soup in a long dinner, that we should discard soup. It is, perhaps, a trifle more troublesome than some other dishes, but "the labour we delight in, physics pain," and in this, perhaps, more than in most cases, a little care will make up for scanty materials. We like soup; indeed, we are fond of it; to use one of Mrs. Glasse's expressions, we love sonp, and like to have it at least once a-week. It is economical, inasmuch as it enables you to have every scrap of material used up; but they should be carefully collected and selected. Very good soup may be made at little or no expense. The secret of this is—bones! If you will take the trouble to keep the bones of the most close-cutten joints, and those of other meat which has been cooked and has appeared at table, down even to mutton chop bones, you can, by slowly stewing them either in the oven or near the fire, get a liquid which is the foundation—"stock" is the technical word—of any soup you like to make. Avoid, however, having pork bones alone; these and all others together may be used, and then all should be left till the next day to grow cold. The great object of this is to enable you to take off the fat which lies congealed in a solid cake on the surface. This stock may be kept for some days, if not immediately wanted, for the wax-like covering keeps the air from the liquid. Except this is done, except the fat be got rid of, and this is the only effectual way to do it, the soup will be greasy and bad. The further processes are to warm up the stock, adding as much water as will make it up to quantity or quality required, then season it, and put in whatever is liked in the way of herbs and flavouring. These determine the character of the soup. "The war-whoop is all very well," as an American gentleman once said to us, "but give me the peace-whoop!" So say we, allowing for a little difference in spelling. It is tasty, and easily made. At this stage of the proceedings you must add the peas, either whole or split, or you may use peas-flour, and the whole should be well boiled for an hour or two, or even more, for otherwise the soup will have a raw, farinaceous taste. The bones should be then taken out, and, although it takes a little more trouble, it is a good thing to "colour" the soup. The colour you get as follows;—Put a small teaspoonful of moist sugar into an iron spoon, hold it between the bars at a red fire till the sugar blazes, but no longer, then put a little of the liquor into the blazing sugar, and you can then pour the sugar, as much as will produce a rich brown, into the pan of soup. You will see as you pour it in how much to use—it will perhaps not be necessary to use all the sugared liquor. All you have now to do is to strain the soup through a sieve; after this the soup is complete, but must be made and kept thoroughly hot, almost boiling, until poured into a warmed tureen for the table. It is desirable to have the soup-plates slightly warmed also, for a great element in the enjoyment of soup is, that it should be served "hot and hot." Now in all this, no expense, no extra cost is involved. The bones are there, after the soup has been made, quite as good for the rag-collector or the sand-man as if they had not been used; and what other cost is incurred beyond that of a little more trouble the reader can judge for himself. One can make it expensive if one chooses. You may put in anything almost, from a red herring to a pint of sherry, or a few glasses of Burgundy—oysters and truffles come not amiss, and if you can hit upon anything more costly, why, as the old cookery books say, "throw it in."

SONNET TO SPRING.

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

O WINTER, leave us now that we may live:
Thy cold breath makes us feel our souls as dead:
Our hearts go wandering 'neath skies of lead—
Cold, cold—asleep as bees in wintry hive;
But, would'st thou only let thy child, the Spring,
Play round our hearts and glad our heavy eyes,
By dancing out the new green boideries
Round Earth's brown robe—what praises would we sing!
O die away, and let the south-west come:
Then will the thrush pour his sweet sadness out;
And weeds speck close the hedgerow banks about,
With emblem blooms, some starred, and cross-shaped some,
Then fairies will again flit round the ring;
And we again shall live—in love with Spring.

A BILLIARD MEDLEY.

A GRAND billiard entertainment took place on the eighth day of last week, at the Free Trade Hall, in the large room, which was crowded to excess. The match was between John Roberts, the champion, and John Roberts, junior, against W. Cook, the wonderful spot-stroke player, and Bowell, of London, in a four-handed game, five thousand up, for one thousand pounds a side. In addition to the game, other attractions were given in the shape of readings, recitations, songs, and dances, by the players. Mr. Roberts, the champion, moved that Mr. Alderman R—m—y take the chair. Everybody knew that the worthy alderman was himself an adept at spotting, and would see fair play. It had been his intention to move that another gentleman present should preside, but he was at issue with the hon. gent. in his views about reciprocity. He (Mr. Roberts) was a free-trader in billiards, and Cook or any one else might "pot" him as often as they liked. He himself intended to put in all he knew. Owing to certain disclosures which had lately been made at the Assize Courts, before Mr. Justice Willes, relative to dealings with his Satanic Majesty, he thought it perhaps better that his hon. friend should not preside. He would say nothing further, but merely remark, E. O. B., which might signify Ethics Of Billiards, or anything else they liked.

The gentleman alluded to said he should be happy to second the motion that Mr. Alderman R—m—y should take the chair. To show his consistency to the principle of reciprocity, he would exchange initials with the champion, and say, with Mr. Newdegate, U. B. D——. By that he did not mean to consign Mr. Roberts to the infernal regions, and trusted he should accept the hint in a Pickwickian sense. With reference to the potentate to whom the champion had alluded, he (the speaker) had always understood that the Prince of Darkness was a gentleman. He should be ready to reciprocate in the harmony and entertainments of the evening, if they so willed it, by giving them a reading, which he had lately been studying, on the subject, descriptive of an interview between himself and the personage in question. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Alderman R—m—y, having taken the chair, said he should watch the spotting closely, and stand no kidding. He then called upon the players to commence.

Stepping forth, the champion recited the lines from *Antony and Cleopatra* commencing with "Let us to billiards," and Cowper's poem, "I am monarch of all I survey." He commenced the game by screwing his own ball into the pocket ten times off the red in succession, and then gave a miss, remarking quietly, "Take the cue from me."

Mr. Cook then recited, "If I could catch him once upon the hip," from the *Merchant of Venice*.

The Chairman said they were out of order. They ought to have commenced with an overture.

Mr. Cook said that he was quite willing to make an overture to the champion any day he liked.

Mr. Roberts said he should only be too glad to reciprocate (tremendous cheers from E. O. B.)

Cook then went on with the game, making a brilliant break of fifty by good all-round play, but could not get on to the spot stroke.

John Roberts, junior, then delivered the speech from King John—"The thunder of my cannon shall be heard," and dashed off in the most brilliant manner, making forty-five successive losing hazards, no end of cannons, and leaving his own and his father's score at two hundred, his final stroke being a miss off Cook, whereupon he immediately sang, "O Willie, we have missed you."

Bowell next took up the game, and showed some very steady and skilful fluking. Having scored three tens off the balls in three strokes, he got the Champion's ball over the top pocket, and, reciting Hamlet's speech, "Now, might I do it pat," did it pat accordingly, and then broke down. Here all the performers indulged in a genuine break-down dance, John Roberts, junior, accompanying them on the balls. The score now stood at three hundred against two hundred and fifty.

The Champion then recited Falstaff's speech commencing "Em-Bowell'd," alluding to his having been potted, whereupon Bowell replied in Iago's words, "I learn'd it in England, where, indeed, they are most potent in potting."

The Champion now set to work in earnest, and began scoring rapidly, making two hundred off the spot stroke, three hundred losing hazards, besides others, and never stopping until the score stood at two thousand. He then gave a reading from *Macbeth*—"At least we'll die with harness on our back."

After an interval of half an hour, the Chairman insisted upon an overture; none of Cook's chaff, but a real musical overture; whereupon all the players performed a brilliant symphony on the table, entitled, "The Music of the Spheres," Mr. John Roberts, junior, accompanying them on a barrel organ.

It was now Cook's turn. After singing "Ye spotted snakes," from the *Midsummer's Night's Dream*, he set to work with a vengeance. After scoring two hundred and fifty by magnificent all-round play, he got on to his favourite stroke and kept pegging away, exclaiming, every time he put the red in, like Glo'ster over King Henry's body, "Down, down to ——, and say I sent thee!" By the time he had scored some fifteen hundred without any signs of finishing, young John Roberts had smoked a cigar and fallen fast asleep, to the accompaniment of a snoring chorus by the whole of the audience, excepting the Chairman, who had become violently excited while all this spotting was going on. They were awakened by Cook knocking all the balls off the table at one stroke.

The Champion here gave a reading from *Macbeth*, "Out, damned spot!" and John Roberts, junior, sang the song, "As we go bobbin' round, around," and recited The Charge of the Light Brigade, "Cannon to right of them, cannon to left of them, cannon in front of them!" Suiting the action to the word, he commenced cannoning all round, leaving off with a score of six hundred in honour of the famous cavalry charge. Bowell now got to work, and began scoring wonderfully. He had just brought his own and Cook's score to about a level with that of their opponents, when a tremendous explosion took place beneath the platform, accompanied by a fearful smell of brimstone. A transparency was at the same time exhibited at the further end of the room, with the word, "Reciprocity" illuminated in large letters. Then the gas went out, and in the confusion the balls were lost. No serious damage was done. The Chairman lost his hat. The game was drawn, and the company adjourned to the Board of Refreshments, in Windmill Street, where the Right Hon. the President thereof attended to their wants, in his shirt sleeves.

NEW BILLIARD RULES.—An important step in relation to the game of billiards has just been taken. At a meeting of some of the first players and leading table makers it has been decided that, in the matches to be played for the championship, no tables should be used that do not conform to certain standard requirements now precisely and for the first time laid down and defined. These requirements relate to the size of the balls, the width of the pockets, and the position of the spot at the top of the tables.

ERRATUM.—In the article last week on Crompton, the inventor of the spinning mule, the printer made the writer say that "Hargreaves was driven out of his native county by an *influential noble*." It should have been "infuriated mob." This singular mistake almost deserves to be placed among the "curiosities of errata."

A PROLOGUE.

The following are the principal passages of the Prologue spoken at the opening performance of the Sale Dramatic Club:—

THE art dramatic soars on buoyant wings,
And shakes her wallet, rich in Queens and Kings,
In many colour'd garbs of Knights and Squires,
In classic temples and in Gothic spires,
The tale of pathos and the scenes sublime,
Which thrill'd the past and nerve the present time,
The playful humour and the satire keen
Which fancy lends, to light the mimic scene,
And that bright mirror, in its antique frame,
Which Shakespere holds on pinnacle of fame—
These be our stimulants—for love of these
We set our sails and court the fav'ring breeze,
Let "Middling Orleans basis" go its ways,
And make our yarn a twist of greenest bays;
Good bye to counting-house, farewell to mart,
Rest weary brain and wildly flutt'ring heart!
The sweat of brow—the ever anxious eye,
Which sees a bargain in each passer by,
Depart—avaunt! The poet's wand is wav'd,
Now all the world with golden floor is pav'd.

So sweet the uses of the poet's song,
Which lift the soul above the bart'ring throng;
So fair the forms that flit athwart his page,
And still renew their youth from age to age;
Shall we not welcome them—the glittering band,
As mystic missions from a better land,
Who bring from daily toils a bright release,
And point to paths of pleasantness and peace?

Thus as December's cheerless chills prevail,
We light the hearthstone with *A Winter's Tale*
Or start the quaint conceit—yet scarcely strange—
The doings of Autolycus on 'Change,
Or let *The Merry Wives* chaff huge Sir John,
What time the cock-crow bids the Ghost begone,
Or mix up Dogberry with the county force,
Or hear King Richard calling for his horse,
The melancholy Jaques seeing books
In running overdrafts on Cunliffe Brooks,
Or Juliet's pretty lips, with doleful pout,
Bid Romeo wait until her Sunday out.

So wags along the new world we have cast,
Too swift and bright and beautiful to last;
But still a world bedeck'd with fancy free,
A lovely golden world for you and me;
Too scant our untried powers on this first night
To show you all this land of pure delight;
But by and bye, as practice aids our skill,
And perseverance seconds earnest will,
We hope to bow at Shakespere's hallow'd shrine,
To lift the veil and let the glory shine;
Lisping his words, exulting in his rhyme,
Who spoke not for one age but for all time.

TEETOTALISM BY EXAMPLE.

A stupid joke, or ludicrous reality—which?

LOST, in the neighbourhood of Mount Broughton, by being delivered in mistake on New Year's Eve, a CASK of WINE. The drayman, who is forgetful of the circumstances, and is responsible to his employers, will be grateful if the gentleman at whose house it was delivered will at once inform him.—Address R 57, at the printers'.

We scissor the above from the second column of last Saturday's *Courier*. The drayman has furnished a capital text for a teetotal sermon. Let the drayman be considered a stern reality, by all manner of means. Here is a new stage in the drunkard's progress. "Beware of the Bottle, or the Drunken Drayman's Deplorable Doom. A tract, 24 pp., price 2d., or 1s. 6d. per dozen." Downward stage No. 3: the drayman leaves his casks promiscuously, up and down Broughton, Pendleton, and Hulme, and goes home, with empty dray, to punch his wife's head, and render himself generally unpleasant to his family. Frantic search next morning after casks. Said casks all fallen into teetotal hands. Teetotal hands stave in each cask. Glorious destruction of alcoholic poison. Drayman ruined, dismissed, chawed up, and finished entirely. Takes to drinking harder than ever, upon nothing a week, also to making himself still more unpleasant than before to wife and family. Moral winding-up, particularly recommended for the perusal of servants and young children. Or, better still,—teetotal hands abstract alcoholic poison from casks, substitute pure water, cork and restore to owners. Owners compel drayman to drink casks dry by way of fearful punishment. Drayman, never having tasted water before, is astonished and delighted at the flavour; becomes teetotaller on the spot; reforms, leaves off draying, delivers teetotal lectures, and then, "in the odour of sanctity—dies."

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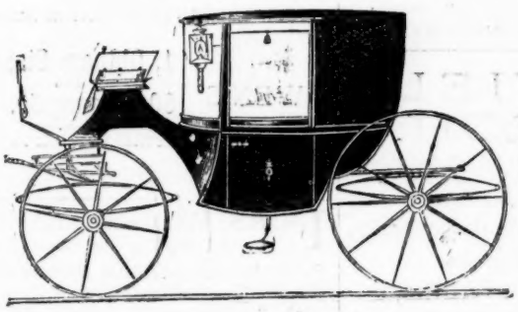

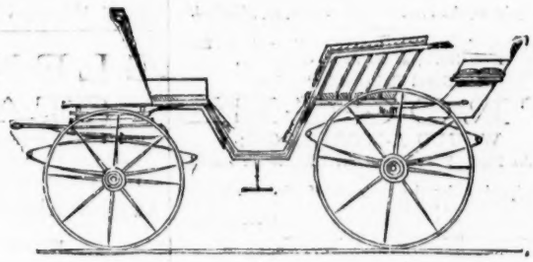

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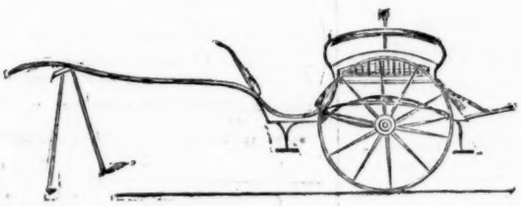

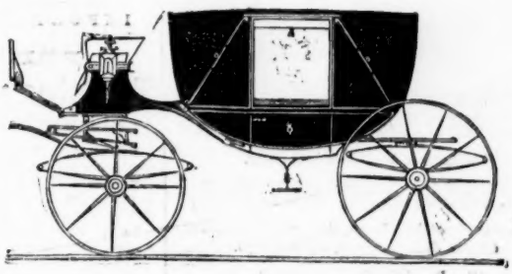

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N.B.—The day performances will be in every respect the same as those every evening at seven.
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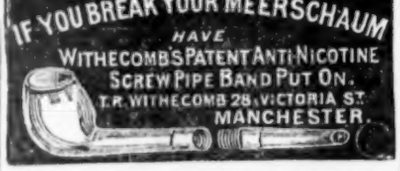

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